

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 06TELAVIV4892, CODEL NELSON AND ISRAEL DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06TELAVIV4892**.

| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 06TELAVIV4892 | 2006-12-20 10:36 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | SECRET | Embassy Tel Aviv |

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
[yet](#)
[set](#)

VZCZCXRO9767
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHTV #4892/01 3541036
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 201036Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8303
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 5433
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 004892

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR H AND NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KPAL](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL NELSON AND ISRAEL DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE

DISCUSS IRAN, SYRIA, LEBANON

REF: A. TEL AVIV 4828

1B. TEL AVIV 4890

Classified By: PolCouns Marc Sievers for reasons 1.4 (B/D)

11. (S) SUMMARY: On December 12, Colonel Amit Aviram of Israeli Defense Intelligence (IDI) briefed Senator Bill Nelson (FL) on regional security threats facing Israel. Aviram described the Middle East as caught in a struggle between moderates and Iranian-backed extremists, and said the growing Iranian threat was the Israeli security establishment's chief concern. IDI believed that Iran would master the uranium enrichment process in 2007, and could have a nuclear weapon by 2010. Aviram said that despite setbacks, Hizbullah was still a formidable force in Lebanon, and was seeking, with Iranian and Syrian assistance, to rebuild its military capabilities. Aviram acknowledged that the interests of Israel and moderate Arab states were beginning to converge, but said that the Arabs needed progress on the Palestinian track before they could publicly cooperate with Israel. END SUMMARY.

Iran: Nukes by 2010

12. (S) Colonel Aviram told Senator Nelson that the region was caught in a destabilizing struggle between Iranian-backed extremists -- such as Hizballah and Hamas -- and moderate forces -- such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinians, Fatah movement. He said Israel's chief security concern was no longer Palestinian terrorism, but the growing Iranian threat. Aviram said that the Israeli intelligence community believed that diplomacy would fail and that during 2007, Iran would cross a &dangerous new threshold by &mastering the uranium enrichment process. Iran's goal, he said, was to stall the diplomatic process indefinitely, in order to wear down the international community until the world is finally forced to accept Iran's nuclear activities. Given the current rate of progress, he said, Iran would develop a nuclear weapon by 2010. Senator Nelson challenged/questioned this assessment, noting that the U.S. intelligence community believed it would take a little longer for Iran to achieve nuclear weapons. Aviram responded that the 2010 estimate came from a thorough GOI review of all available intelligence, and was based on the assumption that Iran would be able to continue proceeding at the current pace, without running into too many unexpected technical or political obstacles.

13. (S) Aviram also highlighted Iranian support for Hizballah and interference in Iraq as serious problems, which had the potential to complicate the West's efforts on the nuclear issue. He said that Iran continues to provide weapons and training to Palestinian militants. Iranian political and financial support for Hamas was increasing, he said; in recent months, Iran has contributed about \$250 million to Hamas.

Hizballah, Lebanon, Syria

14. (S) Aviram said the recent war in Lebanon had been a victory for moderate forces in the region, because it had resulted in the deployment of UNIFIL and LAF forces into southern Lebanon. He acknowledged that Hizballah was still active, and was rapidly rebuilding its military capabilities with the help of Iran and Syria, but said that at least it was no longer able to operate openly. The danger at the moment was that Hizballah might succeed in its political bid to topple the moderate government of Lebanese PM Siniora. The IDI also assessed that Hizballah might resort to provocations that could lead to violence and a general deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. Aviram said he hoped the Arab League's mediation effort would help ease the

tensions. Referring to his meeting with PM Olmert (ref. A), Senator Nelson asked whether Israel could have dealt a fatal blow to Hizballah if it had carried on the war for three more days. Aviram responded that the IDF would not have been able to destroy Hizballah completely, given the latter's ability to conceal weapons and fighters among the civilian population and unwillingness to acknowledge defeat.

15. (S) On Hizballah's rearmament efforts, Aviram said he did not know exactly which weapons Hizballah was now receiving

TEL AVIV 00004892 002 OF 002

from Syria and Iran, but said that Israeli intelligence continued to watch supply convoys transit the Syrian border. He described the rearmament process as quiet but intense.8 In response to a query from Senator Nelson, Aviram said that while both Syria and Iran have been longtime weapons suppliers to Hizballah, Syria had in the past shown a willingness to supply weapons that even the Iranians refused to provide. Under Bashar al-Assad, he said, Damascus had shown a cavalier lack of concern over the traceability of its weapons supplies to Hizballah. During the war, the most damaging weapon used against Israel was a Syrian-made 220mm rocket, he said.

Engaging the Moderate Arab States

16. (S) Senator Nelson offered that there appeared to be a growing alignment of interests between Israel and the more moderate Sunni Arab states, such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, who see a growing threat in Iran. Aviram agreed, and said the GOI was exploring ways to leverage this new reality. Aviram cautioned, however, that the ongoing Palestinian conflict made it difficult for the moderate Arab states to cooperate with Israel. They need progress in the Palestinian arena in order to publicly collaborate with us,8 he said, but they might also, at some point, be willing to do clandestine things with us, even absent progress on the Palestinian front.8 (NOTE: This view differs from PM Olmert, who argues -- most recently to CODEL McCain (ref. B) -- that the moderate Arabs do not need Israeli concessions to the Palestinians in order to work more closely with Israel against Iran.)

17. (U) CODEL Nelson cleared this message.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

CRETZ